



Erie County Clerk to DMV: stop selling personal information

By Al Vaughters, News 4 Reporter

Published: May 20, 2015, 7:40 pm | Updated: May 20, 2015, 8:30 pm

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) — County clerks across New York were alarmed by a CBS News report that the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles is selling personal information gleaned from drivers licenses and car registrations, to the tune of \$60 million last year.

That is the State DMV, not the county auto bureaus where most New Yorkers take care of transact their drivers licenses and vehicle registrations.

Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs said, another county clerk brought the report to his attention.

“It was a real shock to us, that this data which is funneled through our auto bureaus in New York state, then in turn is sold off for profit, and we don’t know to what organizations, and for what purpose.”

Jacobs said he has personally written the governor, and the DMV Commissioner asking that the

practice be discontinued, especially in this day and age when identity theft is a big concern.

“This is something on the minds of our citizens and they expect privacy when they come in here, and we are now shocked that that may not be the case.”

Lasondra Moore of Buffalo is paying extra to get her license back after it was suspended, and feels she is being exploited by the DMV.

“If they are getting money from me paying for things that I should not even be paying for, and then on top of it, you are selling my information. So you are getting paid off of my little transaction two and three times.”

Alec Cornell, of Amherst, said the DMV should warn people their personal information is being sold, who is being sold to, and individuals should be allowed to “opt out” of having their personal data sold.

“You should at least have the right to have your say into whether you are going to give your information away or not. It is your information, not theirs, so I guess you should have a say in it.”

In a written statement, DMV spokesman Joseph Morrissey said the information is sold to insurance companies for rating drivers and investigating claims, and to “employers who are interested in monitoring the driving record of their employees—many of whom hold commercial driver licenses.”

“Like every other state, the DMV makes certain driver information available because we are required under law,” said Morrissey.

Morrissey also stated, New York’s policy of making personal information available is guided by the federal Driver’s Privacy Protection Act.

The New York State Association of County Clerks is set to take up the privacy issue in their meeting next month, and the clerks may ask the state to give drivers the opportunity to “opt out” of having their personal information sold.

At least one state lawmaker is drafting legislation with an “opt out” provision.

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There would be a HUGE uproar if this was over gun registration information.

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The DMV should be asking if I wish to opt in for having my info sold, not presuming that it is ok unless I say no. Isn't that way for the handgun registrations? Lawmakers need to draft a bill making it illegal for any business to sell your personal information in any form to anyone without specific opt in from the person who usually benefits least. This includes voter registration info, customer discount/loyalty programs, dmv and other state databases, or your tax info.

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If they are selling my data, where are my royalties. If I was selling something that doesn't belong to me, I would go to jail.

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The article is misleading and doesn't tell the whole story.

Insurers already have access to MV104A Police Accident Reports to investigate claims. For an additional fee, DMV provides full access to all driver and car registration information, whether you've been involved in a crash or not.

For years, these confidential databases were restricted to law enforcement, and insurers who were investigating a loss. At some point, DMV decided they could turn a profit by wholesaling it to insurers.

The insurance companies in turn sell your personal information to databrokers, and who knows where it goes from there.

Ever wonder where the incessant garbage mailings from AAA, AARP and that over-rated lizard car insurance company come from?

WIVB News 4 Buffalo, NY

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